

CONFORMITY ANALYSIS

Introduction

Regional Transportation Improvement Program

The Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) is the federally required short-range document that implements the long-range Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The biennial RTIP update is produced on an even year cycle. This RTIP cycle is consistent with the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) cycle. The 2008 STIP in the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) region was incorporated into the 2008 RTIP for conformity analysis. The Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approved the 2008 RTIP on November 17, 2008.

RTIP Amendment 08-28 Project Description

RTIP Amendment 08-28 includes only two projects for which conformity needs to be reaffirmed (see project listing). Both projects are located within the Coachella Valley portion of the Salton Sea Air Basin (SSAB).

Federal Conformity Requirements

Federal and state regulations allow that SCAG, as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), may rely on a previous regional emissions analysis when processing amendments, in the event that certain conditions are met. FHWA and SCAG have identified the following type of 2008 RTIP amendments for which SCAG may rely on the existing regional emissions analysis¹:

“Category 3. Formal Amendment – Relying on the existing Conformity Determination. This amendment may include adding a project or a project phase to the program. This amendment category consists of projects that are modeled and are included in the regional emissions analysis.”

Amendment 08-28 relies on the regional emissions analysis for the 2008 RTIP which also updated the 2008 RTP emission analysis. Section 93.122(g) is the relevant part of the Transportation Conformity rule for this amendment.

Conformity Status of Current RTIP and RTP

On June 5, 2008, the federal conformity determination for the 2008 RTP was approved for all the non-attainment and maintenance areas in the SCAG region:

- South Central Coast Air Basin (SCCAB) (Ventura County Portion) – Ozone
- South Coast Air Basin (SCAB) – Ozone, NO₂, CO, PM_{2.5}, and PM₁₀

¹ SCAG, *Final 2008 Regional Transportation Improvement Program Guidelines*, October 2007, page 26.



- Western Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB) (Antelope Valley Portion of Los Angeles County and San Bernardino County Portion Excluding Searles valley) – Ozone
- MDAB (San Bernardino County including Searles Valley) – PM10
- Salton Sea Air Basin (SSAB) (Coachella Valley portion and Imperial County portion) – Ozone and PM10

On November 17, 2008, the federal agencies approved funding and determined conformity of the 2008 RTIP. The 2008 RTIP is based on the 2008 RTP and implements the projects and programs included in the fiscal years (2008/09 – 2013/2014) of the 2008 RTP.

Summary of Conformity Analysis and Findings

SCAG reaffirms the applicable conformity findings for the 2008 RTIP, which can be found at:

http://www.scag.ca.gov/rtip/pdf/adopted/08/Adopted08RTIP_TA_Sec01.pdf

This reaffirmation covers the findings for all applicable pollutants, including regional emissions analyses, financial constraint test, timely implementation of Transportation Control Measures (TCMs), applying the use of the latest planning assumptions and the latest approved emissions model (EMFAC2007), reaffirming consistency between the adopted 2008 RTIP and the adopted 2008 RTP, and reaffirming the process for interagency consultation and public participation.

SCAG has completed its analysis of the proposed changes to the 2008 RTIP. SCAG's findings for the approval of this amendment are as follows:

Overall

Statement of Fact: Inclusion of this amendment in the 2008 RTIP would not change any other policies, programs and projects which were previously approved by the federal agencies on November 17, 2008.

Finding: SCAG has determined that the 2008 RTIP Amendment 08-28 is consistent with all federal and state requirements and complies with the federal conformity regulations.

Consistency with Current RTP and RTIP

The two projects in Amendment 08-28 are from the adopted 2008 RTP, which is a conforming Plan. Amendment 08-28 does not include any new regionally significant projects beyond those currently included in the 2008 RTP, nor does it move a project from any modeling horizon year currently assumed in the 2008 RTP and 2008 RTIP. Furthermore, the design, concept and scope of the projects do not differ significantly from what was described in the 2008 RTP. Allocating funds to these projects will not delay the implementation of projects in the 2008 RTP or 2008 RTIP.

Finding: The 2008 RTIP Amendment 08-28 is consistent with the adopted 2008 RTP and 2008 RTIP.



Regional Emissions Analysis

The regional emissions analysis for the amendment was performed with the SCAG Regional Transportation Model used for the 2008 RTP and 2008 RTIP and utilizes the planning, socioeconomic and model assumptions from the 2008 RTP and 2008 RTIP.

SCAG is using the emissions analysis for the 2008 RTIP because the RTIP emissions analysis updates the regional emissions analyses for the 2008 RTP. The regional emissions analysis methodology for this amendment to the 2008 RTIP uses currently applicable budgets to determine conformity for all criteria pollutants. Specifically, this conformity determination is being made for the Coachella Valley portion of the SSAB only since the RTIP Amendment 08-28 projects are located within this portion of the air basin. RTIP Amendment 08-28 does not result in any modeling changes.

Finding: The 2008 RTIP Amendment 08-28 regional emissions for Ozone precursors (NO_x, ROG/VOC) are consistent with all applicable emissions budgets for all milestone, attainment, and planning horizon years in the Coachella Valley portion of the SSAB.

Finding: The 2008 RTIP Amendment 08-28 regional emissions for PM₁₀ are consistent with all applicable emissions budgets for all milestone, attainment, and planning horizon years in the Coachella Valley portion of the SSAB.

Timely Implementation of TCMs

Finding: There are no TCM projects in the SSAB. Further, the 2008 RTIP Amendment 08-28 does not change timely implementation of SCAB or SCCAB TCM projects. All SCAB and SCCAB TCM projects in the federally approved conforming 2008 RTIP are given funding priority and are on schedule for implementation.

Fiscal Constraint Analysis

Finding: RTIP Amendment 08-28 includes the most recent financial plan for the 2008 RTIP. All projects listed in the 2008 RTIP (including the proposed amendment) are financially constrained for all fiscal years.

Interagency Consultation and Public Involvement Analysis

The prior regional conformity analysis leading to FHWA and FTA's approval on November 17, 2008 complied with all federal and state requirements for interagency consultation and public involvement as documented in Section V of Technical Appendix, Volume II of the 2008 RTIP. For RTIP Amendment 08-28, SCAG will undergo additional public involvement including solicitation via email for comments from the Transportation Conformity Working Group. In addition, Amendment 08-28 will be posted on SCAG's website (www.scag.ca.gov) for a 15-day public comment period.

Finding: The 2008 RTIP Amendment 08-28 complied with all federal and state requirements for interagency consultation and public involvement.

